

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 02917 291732Z

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S E C R E T AMMAN 2917

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, US

SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR KING HUSSEIN ON PRESIDENT'S TALKS WITH BEGIN

REF: STATE 077944

1. I DELIVERED IN WRITTEN FORM TEXT OF REFTEL (WITH EXCEPTION FYI OF PARAS. 9 AND 11) BRIEFING TO KING HUSSEIN ON MARCH 29, THE DAY FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO JORDAN FROM VISIT TO IRAN.

2. KING SHOWED IMMEDIATE INTEREST IN SUBJECT AND READ TEXT CAREFULLY IN MY PRESENCE COMMENTING BRIEFLY AS HE READ. KING LAUGHED KNOWINGLY IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ASSERTION IN BRIEFING THAT "BEGIN DID NOT GO BEYOND PRESENT POSITIONS, NOR DID WE EXPECT HIM TO."

3. I THEN WENT OVER ORALLY THE FYI POINT IN PARA. 9 AND, WITH RESPECT TO PARA. 9 ASSERTION OF OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO MAKE "ANODYNE" STATEMENT AFTER BEGIN VISIT, SAID THAT I HAD LOOKED UP PRECISE DEFINITION OF "ANODYNE" FOR MY OWN EDIFICATION AND FOUND IT MEANT "ANYTHING THAT SOOTHES DISTURBED FEELINGS." KING SAID APPROVINGLY HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE IS A GOOD BIT TO BE READ BETWEEN THE LINES, IMPLYING HIS APPROVAL OF TOUGH U.S. POSTURE ON THE BEGIN VISIT.

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4. REGARDING POINT IN PARA. 7 ABOUT SIGNS IN ISRAEL OF A PROFOUND REAPPRAISAL, I MENTIONED THAT A LENGTHY DEBATE WAS GOING ON IN KNESSET AT THAT VERY MOMENT IN RESPONSE TO BEGIN'S REPORT THAT MORNING ON HIS VISIT TO U.S. AFTER BRIEFLY DESCRIBING RADIO REPORT OF BEGIN SPEECH, I SAID I HOPED JORDAN WOULD BE

ATTENTIVE TO THE ISRAELI POLITICAL DEBATE IN COMING WEEKS.

5. I CONCLUDED BY ORALLY GOING OVER POINT IN PARA. 11, EMPHASIZING THAT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WANT JORDAN TO KNOW U.S. IS DETERMINED TO PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED IN PEACE EFFORT AND IS COUNTING ON JORDANIAN AND SAUDI HELP AT APPROPRIATE TIME.

6. IN REPLY, KING HUSSEIN EXPRESSED SINCERE APPRECIATION TO PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY FOR KEEPING HIM CLOSELY INFORMED. KING MENTIONED PARATHETICALLY THAT SHAH OF IRAN HAD ALSO RECEIVED A BRIEFING ON BEGIN VISIT FROM U.S. DURING KING'S RECENT VISIT TO IRAN. I REPLIED THAT WE HAD MADE A GENERAL BRIEFING TO SEVERAL COUNTRIES BUT I BELIEVED KING'S BRIEFING WAS CONSIDERABLY MORE DETAILED. HE ADDED THAT TIME IS SHORT FOR MOVING ON THE PROBLEM AND THAT THE TREND OF EVENTS IN THE AREA, INCLUDING SOUTH LEBANON, IS NOT ENCOURAGING.

7. KING DID NOT COMMENT ON ANY PART OF BRIEFING WITH PARTICULAR IMPLICATIONS FOR JORDAN (BROADENING NEGOTIATIONS OR EXPLORATORY IDEAS ON WEST BANK AND GAZA) AND I DID NOT PRESS HIM ON THEM.

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8. COMMENT: KING SEEMED PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN LEARNING IN DETAIL OF THE BEGIN VISIT AND SEEMED GENERALLY ENCOURAGED BY POSTURE U.S. HAD ASSUMED. HE IS HOWEVER ANXIOUS TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THE PEACE EFFORT AND I AM NOT AT ALL SURE HE IS PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE A SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH CHANGE IN ISRAELI ATTITUDES TO MOVE AGAIN TOWARDS MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS. I WENT AT POINT OF ISRAELI REAPPRAISAL AND NEED FOR JORDAN TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT THIS ISSUE AT GREATER LENGTH, AT A DINNER GIVEN THAT DAY BY KING, WITH COURT CHIEF SHARAF AND PRIME MINISTER BADRAN, CITING WEIZMANN'S NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT CALL, THE RESULTS OF THE SOPI POLL AND THE KNESSET DEBATE AS SOME SUPPORTING EVIDENCE. THEY SHOWED SIMILAR SKEPTICISM BUT WOULD OF COURSE BE HAPPY TO BE PROVEN WRONG. SUDDARTH

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